

be accomplished with reference to a backup LAS list and the live list that are stored in the master LAS devices. In particular, a user or system designer stores a backup LAS list, which identifies all of the backup LAS devices on a bus, in the master LAS at the time the control system is first put into operation. At the time the master LAS receives a backup LAS list, the master LAS may automatically send the list of backup link active scheduler devices to the backup link active scheduler. --

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending and at issue in the application with claims 1, 10, 17, and 19 being independent claims.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1-24 as obvious over combinations of two or more of what the examiner has called the Applicant Admitted Prior Art [hereinafter "AAPA"], McLaughlin (EP 0 460 308 A1), Burns et al.(WO 98/14853), Shapiro et al. (US 6,230,286 B1), and Chrabaszcz et al. (US 6,263,387 B1). Reconsideration in view of the remarks below is respectfully requested.

Each of the pending claims recites an apparatus or a method for use in a process control system having a master link active scheduler (LAS) and a backup LAS that provides a new link active schedule to the backup LAS by automatically sending the new link active schedule from the master LAS to the backup LAS upon receipt of the new link active schedule by the master LAS. This method and system overcome the deficiencies present within the prior art, including the AAPA, which occur when an operator sends a new link active schedule to the master LAS, but inadvertently forgets to send the new link active schedule to each backup LAS, which may result in failure of the system when the master LAS with the new link active schedule switches control over to the backup LAS with an old link active schedule.

None of the cited art discusses or suggests a system or a method that automatically transmits a link active schedule from a master LAS to a backup LAS upon receipt of that new link active schedule at the master LAS. While the AAPA includes both a master and a backup LAS, the AAPA does not disclose or suggest any mechanism that automatically provides a new link active schedule from one LAS device to another LAS device or any need to do so. Instead, the AAPA relies on an operator to send the new link active schedule to each backup LAS in conjunction with the operator sending the new link active schedule to the master LAS. Of course, this technique requires multiple messages or functions on the